

Arizona Automobile Theft Authority (Report Highlights)

July 2001

Arizona has been one of the nation's leaders in auto thefts for the last several years. The Automobile Theft Authority was established in 1992 to determine the extent of auto theft and analyze effective methods to combat it.

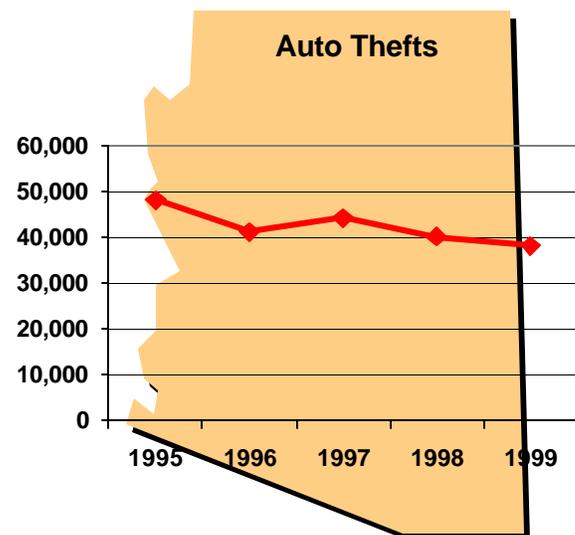
Our Conclusions:

Because auto theft rates are affected by many factors, we cannot determine how much the Authority has impacted the continuing decline in auto theft rates. However, the Authority should do more to determine the merit of the different programs it funds. In addition, the Authority needs to develop guidelines to govern the \$2.8 million it annually awards in grants.

Arizona Automobile Theft Authority

- 12 members representing law enforcement, insurance companies, and the public.
- \$3.5 million revenue (semi-annual assessment of 50 cents per insured car).
- Provides funding for auto theft investigation, prosecution, and public awareness programs.

rates began decreasing in 1996, many of the Authority's programs were not developed until 1997 or later. In addition, a variety of factors, including changes in the economy, can affect auto theft rates.



Management Information and Operating Procedures Need Improvement

The Authority cannot measure its impact on overall auto theft rates. Although auto theft

However, the Authority can and should measure whether the programs it funds are worthwhile. It can do this by developing *outcome*, *efficiency*, and *quality* perform-

ance measures for its programs. Examples of such measures could include:

- **Outcome**—the percentage increase in felony arrests;
- **Efficiency**—the cost per felony arrest; and
- **Quality**—stakeholders’ perceptions of the program.

Nationwide, Arizona ranks:

#2 In cars stolen per 100,000 residents

#10 In the total number of cars stolen

Authority Lacks Guidelines for its \$2.8 Million in Grants—One of the Authority’s major functions is providing grants to combat auto thefts. Because the Authority has no guidelines to govern its grants process:

- It improperly awarded \$25,500 to a nongovernmental association.
- It is not clear whether other expenditures comply with statutory intent. For example, grants have been used to purchase:
 - Food, drink, and entertainment at public events;
 - A four-wheel-drive vehicle; and
 - Computers and accessories.

Grant procedures and guidelines should address:

- Notices of grant availability—Currently, many agencies are never notified that grants are available.

- Acceptable expenditure guidelines—Are food, computer, or other purchases allowable?
- Grant review criteria—What criteria will be used to evaluate applications?
- Monitoring and reporting requirements—What monitoring, including possible site visits, will be used?

Further, the Governor’s Regulatory Review Council (GRRC) believes the Authority’s grant process should be outlined in rules. However, the Authority currently does not have this statutory power.

The Legislature should:

- ✓ Give the Authority rule-making powers.

The Authority should:

- ✓ Develop outcome, efficiency, and quality performance measures; and
- ✓ Establish written grant guidelines.

To Obtain More Information

- ➡ A copy of the full report can be obtained by calling (602) 553-0333 or by visiting our Web site at:

www.auditor.gen.state.az.us

- ➡ The contact person for this report is **Dot Reinhard**.